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MEMORANDUM FOR: Director of Central Intelligence

VIA: Deputy Director of Central Intelligence
Executive Director
Deputy Director for Administration

FROM: Director of Training and Education

SUBJECT: Perspectives on the Soviet Union Seminar

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1. Last week, Seweryn Bialer and Gail Lapidus (University of California, Berkeley) conducted the first of our Perspectives on the Soviet Union seminars for the Soviet Realities Institute. Together they laid out the foundations, processes and goals of the Soviet system, and in the process outlined Gorbachev's program and the constraints on its achievement.

2. Bialer was just back from Moscow, and frequently related conversations he had had with Soviet Party and Government officials and academics. He described the atmosphere on the eve of the Party Congress as tense. Among the key points made by Bialer:

- ° Gorbachev's unwillingness to restructure the economy will prevent real progress in closing the gap with the West;

- ° We have consistently underestimated the durability of the Soviet system, and overestimated the importance of coercive controls;

- ° Gorbachev wants to reduce the military's role in defense and security questions, and may even establish an advisory body comparable to our National Security Council;

- ° Eastern Europe is increasingly unstable, and Poland is likely to have a violent explosion in the next ten years;

- ° Moscow can be expected to take few new initiatives in the Third World.

SUBJECT: Perspectives on the Soviet Union Seminar

3. The seminars are really intended for officers who work on the USSR, but who are not Soviet experts. In fact, there were some Soviet specialists among the twenty-four participants, but all thought that Bialer and Lapidus did an extraordinary job of making the Soviet condition and problems live. (I can testify that every time I looked in on the group, the "students" were busy as hell taking notes.) I am especially pleased that we had an excellent turnout from the D0, including [redacted] and several desk chiefs.

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4. We taped the sessions and are in the process of editing the entire program. Much interest has already been expressed in viewing all or portions of the tapes.

5. [redacted] is coming in June for the next seminar.

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